

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BORN AGAIN?

LESSON 03 OF 10 · MANUSCRIPT

Primary Scripture: John 3:3-8

“Ye must be born again.”
John 3:7

Bible Life Overcomers Ministry
Where Disciples Are Made
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PRODUCTION NOTE

This manuscript follows the 26-scene narration used for Lesson 03. Scene headings are production labels and are not intended to be spoken aloud.

YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN

Jesus said something that every person needs to understand.

He said:

“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

And again He said:

“Ye must be born again.”

Jesus did not say that being born again is only for pastors.

He did not say it is only for very sinful people.

He said:

“You must be born again.”

But what does that mean?

That is what we are going to learn.

NICODEMUS DID NOT UNDERSTAND

A man named Nicodemus came to Jesus.

Nicodemus was a religious man.

He knew the Scriptures.

But when Jesus told him that he must be born again, Nicodemus did not understand.

He thought Jesus was talking about being physically born a second time.

But Jesus was speaking about another kind of birth.

A spiritual birth.

YOU WERE BORN ONCE

Every person has already experienced one birth.

We were born physically.

That first birth gave us physical life.

We received a human body.
We became part of a human family.
Jesus called this being born of the flesh.
But our first birth is not enough to bring us into the kingdom of God.
We need another birth.

SCENE 04 OF 26 · ROMANS 3:23

WHY DO WE NEED ANOTHER BIRTH?

Why must we be born again?
Because of sin.
In Lesson Two, we learned that all have sinned.
Sin is not only something outside us.
The problem of sin reaches into the human heart.
This is why Jesus did not simply come to make bad people behave better.
We need something deeper than better behaviour.
We need new life from God.

SCENE 05 OF 26 · JOHN 3:7

RELIGION IS NOT THE NEW BIRTH

Nicodemus was religious.
But Jesus still told him:
“You must be born again.”
Going to church is good.
Reading the Bible is good.
Giving to people is good.
Having Christian parents is a blessing.
But none of these things, by themselves, mean that you have been born again.
You cannot become born again simply by trying to become a better person.
You need God to give you new life.

SCENE 06 OF 26 · JOHN 1:13

A BABY CANNOT GIVE BIRTH TO ITSELF

Think about a newborn baby.

Did the baby give birth to itself?

No.

Life was given to the baby.

In the same way, we cannot give ourselves spiritual life.

Good works cannot produce the new birth.

Money cannot produce it.

Religion cannot produce it.

Human effort cannot produce it.

New birth is a work of God.

SCENE 07 OF 26 · JOHN 3:5

BORN OF WATER AND OF THE SPIRIT

Jesus then said something very important.

“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

What does this mean?

We must understand it carefully.

Jesus is speaking about the great work God does in a person.

God cleanses.

And God gives new life by His Spirit.

SCENE 08 OF 26 · EZEKIEL 36:25-27

GOD PROMISED CLEANSING AND A NEW SPIRIT

Long before Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, God had already promised this work.

In Ezekiel chapter thirty-six, God said:

“I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.”

Then God said:

“A new heart also will I give you.”

And:

“I will put my spirit within you.”

Notice the picture.

Cleansing.

A new heart.

And God's Spirit within.

The new birth is not simply cleaning up the outside.

God works inside the person.

SCENE 09 OF 26 · EZEKIEL 36:25

WATER AND CLEANSING

Throughout Scripture, water can be used as a picture of washing and cleansing.

So when we study Jesus' words about being born of water and of the Spirit, we should remember God's promise of cleansing and a new Spirit.

But other Scriptures also help us understand how God cleanses us.

And this brings us to the Word of God.

SCENE 10 OF 26 · EPHESIANS 5:26

WASHED BY THE WATER OF THE WORD

Ephesians chapter five speaks about:

“The washing of water by the word.”

God's Word does not only give us information.

It brings God's truth into our lives.

The Word shows us our sin.

The Word shows us Jesus Christ.

The Word corrects us.

The Word cleanses our thinking.

The Word brings our lives under the truth of God.

SCENE 11 OF 26 · 1 PETER 1:23

BORN OF INCORRUPTIBLE SEED

The Bible gives us another beautiful picture.

First Peter chapter one says:

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.”

Think about a seed.

A seed carries life.

When it is planted, life comes out of it.

Peter tells us that God's Word is like an incorruptible seed.

It does not die.

It lives and remains forever.

God uses His living Word in the work of bringing us to new life.

SCENE 12 OF 26 · JOHN 5:39; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-4

THE WORD SHOWS US CHRIST

The Word tells us who Jesus is.

The Word tells us that we have sinned.

The Word tells us that Christ died for our sins.

The Word tells us that He rose again.

The Word calls us to repent and believe.

God uses His Word to bring the truth of Christ to our hearts.

SCENE 13 OF 26 · JOHN 3:6

BORN OF THE SPIRIT

But hearing words with our ears is not enough.

Jesus said:

“That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life.

This is why the new birth is more than learning Christian teachings.

A person may know many Bible verses and still need new life.

The Holy Spirit works through the truth of God's Word.

He opens our understanding.

He brings conviction of sin.

He points us to Jesus Christ.

And He gives new spiritual life.

SCENE 14 OF 26 · TITUS 3:5

WASHING AND RENEWING

Titus chapter three brings these truths together.

It says that God saved us:

“According to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”

Regeneration simply means new birth.

God washes.

God renews.

God gives new life.

And He does this by His mercy.

Not because we earned it.

SCENE 15 OF 26 · MATTHEW 28:19; ACTS 2:38

WHAT ABOUT WATER BAPTISM?

At this point, someone may ask:

“Is Jesus talking about water baptism?”

Christ commands His disciples to be baptized.

Water baptism is important.

Every disciple should obey Jesus in baptism.

But physical water cannot, by itself, give spiritual life to a dead heart.

A person can enter water with an unchanged heart and come out with the same unchanged heart.

The new birth requires the work of God within us.

Water baptism is an act of faith and obedience to Christ.

But we must never replace the work of the Holy Spirit with a religious ceremony.

GOD GIVES A NEW HEART

What happens when God gives new life?

God promised:

“A new heart also will I give you.”

Being born again is deeper than changing clothes.

Deeper than changing your language.

Deeper than joining a church.

Deeper than trying to look religious.

God begins His work inside you.

Your desires begin to change.

Your direction begins to change.

You begin to see sin differently.

You begin to see Jesus differently.

A NEW CREATION

Second Corinthians chapter five says:

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.”

This does not mean that the person immediately knows everything.

It does not mean that the person will never make another mistake.

A newborn baby is truly alive.

But the baby still needs to grow.

In the same way, when God gives us new life, a new journey begins.

HOW CAN I KNOW?

How can you know that something has changed?

Do not begin by asking whether you are perfect.
Ask about the direction of your life.
Do you now want God?
Do you want to know Jesus?
Do you want to obey Him?
Does sin trouble you in a new way?
Do you want to leave what God calls wrong?
Do you hunger for God's Word?
These things do not save us.
But they are signs of new life beginning to show itself.

SCENE 19 OF 26 · 1 PETER 2:2-3

A NEWBORN NEEDS MILK

What happens after a baby is born?
The baby needs food.
Peter says:
“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”
The same Word that brings the truth of new life to us continues to feed us after we are born again.
A true disciple must learn to hunger for God's Word.

SCENE 20 OF 26 · 1 PETER 1:23; EPHESIANS 5:26; JOHN 3:6; 1 PETER 2:2

FOUR SIMPLE PICTURES

Let us make this very simple.
Remember four pictures.
Seed.
Water.
Spirit.
Milk.
The Word is like incorruptible seed.
God uses His Word in bringing us to new birth.

The Word is also pictured as water that washes and cleanses.

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual life.

And after we are born again, the Word becomes like milk that helps us grow.

Seed — birth.

Water — cleansing.

Spirit — life.

Milk — growth.

SCENE 21 OF 26 · EPHESIANS 2:8-9

YOU CANNOT SAVE YOURSELF

This is why Christianity is not simply about becoming a better version of yourself.

You cannot save yourself.

You cannot wash away your own sin.

You cannot give yourself a new heart.

You cannot give yourself spiritual life.

You need God.

And this is why Jesus Christ came.

SCENE 22 OF 26 · ACTS 3:19; ACTS 16:31

COME TO CHRIST

So what should you do?

Stop hiding your sin.

Stop trusting your good works to save you.

Stop trusting religion.

Agree with God about your sin.

Repent.

Turn away from sin and turn to God.

Believe the Gospel.

Trust Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and rose again.

Come to Him.

THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

Now ask yourself the most important question in this lesson.

Not:

“Do I go to church?”

Not:

“Are my parents Christians?”

Not:

“Am I a good person?”

Not even:

“Have I been baptized?”

The question is:

“Have I been born again?”

Has God given me new life?

JESUS SAID 'MUST'

Jesus did not say:

“You may be born again.”

He said:

“Ye must be born again.”

Do not settle for religion without life.

Do not settle for knowing about Jesus without knowing Him.

Do not settle for outward change while the heart remains unchanged.

You need new life.

You must be born again.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE BORN AGAIN?

To be born again means that God gives you new spiritual life.
He cleanses.
He gives a new heart.
The Holy Spirit makes alive.
God uses His living Word.
And the new life He gives begins to grow through that same Word.
This is not something we can produce by ourselves.
It is the work of God.

SCENE 26 OF 26 · JOHN 3:1-8

CLOSING

Jesus said:
“Ye must be born again.”
Read John chapter three, verses one to eight slowly for yourself.
Ask God to help you understand His Word.
Do not only learn about the new birth.
Make sure that you have been born again.
This is The Way.
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Where Disciples Are Made.

LESSON 03 SUMMARY

SEED	Birth	1 Peter 1:23
WATER	Cleansing	Ephesians 5:26
SPIRIT	Life	John 3:6
MILK	Growth	1 Peter 2:2-3

To be born again means God gives you new spiritual life.
He cleanses, gives a new heart, and makes alive by His Spirit.

“Ye must be born again.” — John 3:7